incurred. The cumulative outstandings of the oil companies from the oil pool account which were Rs. 5701 crores as on 31.3.96 are estimated to rise to Rs. 15,500 crores by 31.3.97.

**Payment of Royalty on Crude Oil to Local Level Groups in Nagaland**

1350. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from the Nagaland Government for payment of 25% royalty on crude oil for allocation to local level groups, including Panchayats;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon;

(c) whether the State Government has also given any guarantee for providing security for the oil installations and equipment, which was refused by it in 1994;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, what steps Government have taken to explore the possibility of the Indian oil companies to resume their operations in that State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Efforts are being made by the Union Government and ONGC to resume oil exploration and production operations in the State in consultation with the State Government.

**Oil Selection Boards in Maharashtra and Punjab**

1351. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Oil Selection Boards in Maharashtra and Punjab have been constituted;

(b) if so, the details of members of those Boards; and

(c) what steps are being taken to see that the Oil Selection Boards function properly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) In order to ensure credibility and transparency in the functioning of the OSBs, suitable instructions have been issued to OSBs from time to time. Also there is a system to monitor the functioning of the Boards by Government periodically. It may also be mentioned that the functioning of the OSBs is currently in abeyance.

**Fall in International Prices of Oil**

1352. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA-SWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem which appeared in the Economic Times dated the 16th February, 1997 under the caption "Significant fall in international oil rates", if so, the details thereof;

(b) how Government propose to pass on the benefits of falling oil prices to the consumers; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?